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# 'Wild Bill' Donovan Dies

## Head of OSS in War

Maj. Gen. William J. (Wild Bill) Donovan, 76, daring leader of this country's intelligence operations during World War II, died yesterday in Walter Reed Army Hospital.

The former director of the Office of Strategic Services suffered a cerebral hemorrhage in April, 1957, and later underwent treatment for arteriosclerosis. He had been hospitalized since then. Death was attributed to heart failure.

President Eisenhower issued the following statement:

"In the passing of Gen. William J. Donovan, the Nation has lost a truly fine American and I have lost a close personal friend. Mrs. Eisenhower and I extend our deepest sympathies to his family in the great personal loss they have sustained."

Gen. Donovan, a Medal of Honor winner for bravery during World War I, gained his greatest fame as a fighting soldier. In the First World War he commanded the "Fighting 69th" regiment of the Rainbow Division. He was wounded three times in action and received, besides the Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal—the first American soldier ever to hold all three decorations.

### Inspired His Men

"His men would have cheerfully gone to hell with him," Father Francis P. Duffy, chaplain of the regiment, once said of its commander. "And as a priest, I mean what I say."

But the general's greatest game came during World War II as head of the OSS. He got together an outlandish collection of college professors, young men who knew Europe and Asia intimately, professional soldiers, and adventurers.

The resulting secret intelligence outfit conducted important research at home and daring exploits abroad, many of them behind enemy lines in unorthodox warfare.

OSS was a shadowy army that fought in silence. It also fostered resistance movements and made possible the escape of some 5,000 members of the armed forces who had been shot down or trapped behind enemy lines.

### Man of Many Parts

Despite this fame as a battle-hardened soldier and as an expert in cloak-and-dagger warfare, General Donovan's activities were much broader in scope. He was a man of many facets: Fighter for liberty, public prosecutor (Assistant Attorney General of the United States, 1924-25), diplomat (Ambassador to Thailand, 1953-54), private attorney, would-be politician (unsuccessful Republican candidate for governor of New York, 1932) and, above all, a humanitarian.

As early as 1915, however, he went to Poland for the American Relief Commission of the Rockefeller Institute to report on relief needs. From then on, he was continually going on



MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM J. DONOVAN

—AP Photo

fact-finding missions both for the government and on his own. In 1956 he was chairman of the National Committee of the International Rescue Committee, which helped the Hungarian refugees. He went to Vienna, too, to deal on the spot with refugees fleeing from the pro-Soviet Communist government in Hungary.

### Rewards of Tenacity

Born in Buffalo, Gen. Donovan worked as a laborer to help his father, a freightyard foreman, with the family expenses. He managed to stay in school at the same time—not by brilliance, but by tenacity. The same tenacity took him to Columbia College in 1901 and in 1907 won him his law degree. Ever since then, on and off, he had practiced law—most recently with his own firm, Donovan, Leisure, Newton & Irvine on New York's Wall Street.

In those early days, he never turned down a request to do an unpaid civic job. The legal assignments he has since undertaken include the American Bar Association's special committee to survey criminal law administration throughout the country to "make justice more certain" and a legal and sociological survey of Wisconsin's criminal justice system.

### Won Humphrey Case

As a private lawyer he also won the celebrated Humphrey case before the United States Supreme Court. In 1935 the justices upheld his contention that President Roosevelt did not have the power to control the decisions of the Federal Trade Commission by arbitrarily removing its chairman.

Many lawyers felt this decision, as well as those knocking down the New Deal NRA and AAA, played a large part in Roosevelt's unsuccessful effort two years later to reorganize the high tribunal.

After World War II, Gen. Donovan served on the war crimes prosecution staff that prepared evidence against the principal Nazi war criminals at Nuernberg.

In 1946 he was decorated by President Truman for his wartime services. The citation said that, "Through his successful achievements, Gen. Donovan contributed in a high degree to the success of military operations in the persecution of the war." The award was the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal he had received in World War I.

### Honored as Athlete

Other field in 1955 when Columbia University presented its

athletic award to him to commemorate his days as one of the backs and his 50 years of devoted service as an alumnus.

The general was one of the founders of the American Legion, although he differed with the Legion when it sought special benefits for able-bodied veterans.

Throughout the postwar years he often asserted that the United States was losing the cold war with the Soviet Union and called for stiff measures to combat it. He urged use of the "best brains and most courageous spirits" to wage an economic, political and psychological counteroffensive to Soviet subversion throughout the world.

He also called for a "just and reasonable" security program in government and warned against "muddle-headed" thinking on the subject.

### Officials Pay Tribute

Many officials paid tribute to the general. Among them are Allan W. Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, successor to the OSS, and Army Secretary Wilbur M. Brucker, who said that "with the passing of Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan the Nation mourns one of its great soldier-statesman."

His wife, the former Ruth Rumsey of Buffalo, was at his bedside when he died. Also there was a brother, the Rev. Vincent Donovan, a Dominican priest. He also leaves a son, David, of Berryville, Va., and five grandchildren. A daughter, Patricia, was killed in an automobile accident in 1940.

A requiem mass will be offered by his brother at 11 a.m. Wednesday in St. Matthews Cathedral. Burial with full military honors will be at 12:45 p.m. in Arlington Cemetery.

Members of the family have requested that expressions of sympathy be in the form of contributions to the International Rescue Committee at 255 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

ER 61-8215/a

Dear Ruth:

Many thanks for your letter of 16 October.

Your kind words as I prepare to leave are gratifying to me but I do not share your concern about great changes, possibly for the worst.

Should you find a need for the large reproduction of Bill's portrait, please let us know.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

Mrs. William J. Donovan

O/DCI/[ ] bd (24 Oct 61)  
Orig - Addressee (typed on DCI/s personal stationery)  
1 - DCI  
1 - DDCI [ ]  
1 - ER ( )  
1 - ADD/S  
1 - O/DCI (Alice)  
1 - General Counsel

61-7898

ST

8 OCT 1961

Dear Ruth:

I think you will recall the excellent portrait of Bill which was done several years ago by Thomas E. Stephens. The original will hang in a key spot in the new building.

Recently, through a new process, we made some full-color photographic reproductions of the portrait which are the same size as the original, 39" x 58". These turned out remarkably well, and at Ole Doering's request one is being sent to the firm to hang in the Partners' Room, and we are inquiring whether the City of Buffalo might not like another copy.

I thought it possible you might like a copy, and if so we can easily arrange to have someone show you one of these prints if you will tell me where and when.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

Mrs. William J. Donovan

[Redacted]

OGG:LRH:jeb

Orig-Addressee (typed on DCI's personal stationery)

✓ 1-DCI *Oia Reading*

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1-General Counsel

250196

Oct - 16 <sup>th</sup>



Executive Secretary

61-8213

Dear Allen -  
I am sorry to  
have been so slow  
in answering your  
letter.

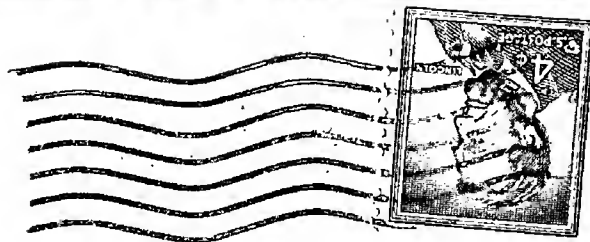
I have written  
my brother to see  
if he could find  
out whether the  
city of Buffalo  
would be interested  
in the picture  
possibly the

250196

Chances I don't think  
Bill would never  
have approved of

Sincerely

Walt Dornan



Mr. Allen W. Dulles  
Central Intelligence  
Agency  
Washington  
D. C.

DD/S 59-3487/A

11-6596/o

7 AUG 1959

Dear Ruth:

The artist who did Bill's portrait for us  
is Thomas E. Stephens. His address is 15 Gramercy  
Park South, New York 3, N. Y., (telephone: Algonquin 4-3863).

I am glad you enjoyed the party for our French  
Resistance friends.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

*Handwritten signature*

Mrs. William J. Donovan

[Redacted box]

STAT

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ADD/ [Redacted box] (6 Aug 59)

Distribution:

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✓ 1 - ER - w/basic

3 - DD/S - chrono, subject, reading

(EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FILE)

*D*

DD/S 59-3487: Ltr dtd 28 July 59 to Mr. Dulles fr Mrs. Donovan (signed Ruth) asking for  
information furnished in the above ltr.

250197



MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Dulles

Attached is a draft of a suggested letter  
for Mrs. Donovan.



H. Gates Lloyd

6 August 1959  
(DATE)

250197

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101  
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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